

Los Angeles Rebellion of 2025

Selected Articles and Essays

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Dedicated to the brave community organizers, patrollers, and community members who resist fascism in Los Angeles—and to all the untold thousands of our friends and family who have been disappeared by the fascist Trump regime.

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Introduction

As I sit in my LA apartment putting together this collection of articles and essays, I can't help but remember the burning sensation as ICE chemical weapons littered the air that fateful June 6 morning in Paramount. The clash at the Home Depot off the 710 freeway that day and night was the spark that started a prairie fire. That fire to this day is still burning.

Vivid memories of waves of people attempting to push back the fascist forces of Donald Trump assembled that day. Department of Homeland Security, through ICE and Border Patrol, predominantly assaulted the suburb of LA that day and became an occupying force for over a year. I recall hearing people cry out, gassed by ICE and gasping for air, that their friends were taken. They were just beyond that battle line of pigs. We tried for hours to push them back and to rescue loved ones. The Battle of Paramount lasted well into the night before DHS and local police finally pushed the community back.

This quickly spread to Compton, downtown LA, Koreatown, Long Beach, and all over. Marine occupation of the city followed, and mass rebellion became the norm. It goes without saying that this was a significant chapter in the history of our movement and the history of Los Angeles.

Thousands of people organized like never before to defend their neighbors and communities. Mass resistance and militant action carried the day as we protected an untold number of people from kidnappings and disappearances.

This book is a collection of my articles and essays written during that time. Documenting the organizational build-up to the

second Trump term and analyzing the rebellion in real-time from my reporting with People's World and Red Star Tribune. A complete reflection and analysis of this period is required and will eventually be written. But in the meantime, I thought this would be invaluable for other organizers resisting MAGA fascism.

1. LA hotel, hospitality workers prepare for strike with airport sit-in

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There was immense build-up to the mass resistance against ICE and Trump's fascist assaults on the communities of Los Angeles; this is not the "start" of class struggle in LA, obviously, but it is the beginning of our story. There was a wave of labor struggles in LA County leading up to the Palestinian solidarity movement and the anti-ICE movement. UNITE HERE Local 11's labor strike was the start of that massive wave.

LOS ANGELES—Next week, thousands of hotel and hospitality workers could go on strike in Los Angeles and Orange County, and the Phoenix metropolitan area. And they prepared for the possibility with a peaceful sit-in of civil disobedience at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The forced strike by members of Unite Here Local 11 is nationally important. Not only would it affect air traffic into and out of the nation's second-largest and sixth-largest cities, but it features a potential union demand for affordable housing for the thousands of workers who toil at the airport.

Given the nation's increasing crisis of affordable housing for working-class people from coast to coast, along with rising numbers of homeless, that's a demand that could be taken up elsewhere. Indeed, the Chicago Teachers Union campaigned for that cause, too, in past contract talks. The LAX sit-in was at the airport's entrance on June 22. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) arrested more than 200 workers and community members, including several notable local officeholders, for participating in civil disobedience. The sit-in was designed to "shut

down LAX,” as a sign UNITE HERE Local 11 hotel and hospitality workers can and will “shut down this city,” as Local 11 co-president Kurt Petersen said at the rally in front of thousands of workers and community members.

In early June, some 96% of voting members of UNITE HERE Local 11 authorized the “largest industry-wide strike in U.S. history.” The local represents 32,000 room attendants, cooks, dishwashers, front desk agents, and food service workers in Los Angeles, Orange County, the Inland Empire, and parts of Arizona—most of whom could be on strike as early as July 4. Their contracts expire at midnight, on June 30.

The key demands of the workers are an immediate \$5 hourly wage increase to keep up with inflation, better family healthcare plans, a livable pension, the creation of a hospitality workforce housing fund, and safe and humane workloads. The demand for more and better housing for working-class people is tied to two big upcoming sports events in L.A.: The 2026 men’s soccer World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics, the first time ever two of the globe’s largest sporting events will occur in the same city back-to-back. Both competitions require “Olympic villages” to house the visiting athletes—and past such projects have presented two dimensions of the housing problems.

In both soccer and the Olympics, current housing for working-class people was torn down to make way for the villages, leaving the residents to shift for themselves. And once the games were over, the developments became luxury dwellings. UNITE HERE’s workforce housing fund is supposed to help solve at least the first of those two problems. Past Olympics and World Cup tournaments have “left local governments indebted for years and have permanently displaced millions of poor residents,” a UNITE HERE press release says. The issue of livable housing is vital in regard to these events. The 1984 Olympics in L.A. was an exception: Its Olympic Village became public housing.

Also, the capitalist propaganda filtered through these events—and their billions of dollars in advertising—could potentially be challenged by a county-wide strike as the next period of contract negotiations after this current one could be a week before

the World Cup. “I voted yes to strike because I commute two hours from my home in Apple Valley to downtown Los Angeles. I deserve to make enough money to live near where I work,” said Brenda Mendoza, a uniform attendant at the JW Marriott LA Live.

Over 100 separate contracts are up with Hyatt, Hilton, Highgate, Accor, IHG, and Marriott. They’re cumulatively valued at \$142.29 billion. These same hotels were given \$15 billion in federal bailouts during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic while cutting jobs by up to 95%—and not everyone who was laid off has been re-hired.

Profits surpass pre-pandemic levels

Hotel profits in Los Angeles and Orange County are greater now than they were at pre-pandemic levels, Marriott’s reported net income in the first quarter of 2023 was \$757 million, yet workers’ wages are decreasing in value due to inflation and rising costs. “L.A.’s tourism industry thrives on the hard work of their employees. But right now, minimum wage workers must work 100 hours a week just to afford an apartment in LA.,” says City Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky. “It’s time to raise the wage and make sure that the people who make Los Angeles a world-class destination can actually afford to live here,” she added.

Local 11 co-president Kurt Petersen said “Hotel workers who work in the booming Los Angeles tourism industry must be able to live in Los Angeles. The industry shamelessly exploited the pandemic and is now reaping greater profits than ever before. Yet workers cannot afford to pay the rent. “This 96% vote to authorize a strike sends a clear message to the industry that workers have reached their limit and are prepared to strike to secure a living wage,” Petersen stated.

At the LAX sit-in, Petersen praised other recent strike efforts, by the United Teachers of Los Angeles/SEIU combination, the Writers Guild of America, Amazon workers, and Starbucks employees. Most of them were at the sit-in at LAX along with United Farm Workers and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice. The build-up to this potential strike has been in the making for months: A small strike at the airport, rallies in April and May,

and the major strikes involving the other unions that have taken place in Los Angeles and Orange County over the last year.

Through that coalition and solidarity work between unions, UNITE HERE Local 11 and SEIU are also pushing the L.A. City Council and the California legislature and governor for a \$25 minimum wage. With the strike imminent, a resolution to these 100 contracts could still be reached. However, if not, thousands of workers will “shut down this city.”

UNITE HERE Local 11 is riding a summer wave of discontent in the working class, and that energy was there at LAX where the community applauded the civil disobedience of hundreds in the face of the police.

Hundreds were arrested including elected City Council members Hugo Soto-Martinez and Nithya Raman and Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo—though the latter was seen taking selfies with the police at the event and Soto-Martinez recently voted to increase police funding and recruitment. However, this type of working-class strength and momentum can never be stopped or co-opted. UNITE HERE Local 11 is ready to go on strike, and the community is ready to support them.

2. Los Angeles Tenants Union: Stop gentrifying Los Angeles!

Originally published in People's World and co-authored by Danny Estrada

Similar to the mass wave of labor struggles that built up both tension and activity that would transcend into the Palestine and anti-ICE movement, the Los Angeles Tenant Union (LATU) is vital to the story. The tenant rights movement in LA is both a sizeable political bloc now and militant in its approach and rhetoric. This clash with the LAPD that is featured in this article is one of many that LATU has faced defending their communities against fascist police gangs.

LOS ANGELES—On Sunday, Oct. 1, the Los Angeles Tenants Union (LATU) and its eastside local, the Union de Vecinos (UDV), held a rally at Hollenbeck Park in Boyle Heights in the name of tenants and the right to housing for all.

The neighborhood is notably one of the last strong-standing enclaves of Latin and Chicano culture in Los Angeles and has battled with a sharp rise in gentrification over recent years as community members have been slowly pushed out by ever-increasing rents and costs of living. Tensions between community members and real estate developers have been on open display in Boyle Heights and East L.A. for years, but they've heightened again over the summer since the Tiao Corporation announced plans to develop an unaffordable market-rate housing complex on the corner of Cesar Chavez and Chicago, in a historic area of Boyle Heights.

At the time of Tiao's announcement in June, community members made their objections known in droves at the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council (BHNC) meeting, where they cited concerns that the development, which would only set aside five

“affordable” units out of the 50 units it proposes, would simply invite further gentrification of the predominantly working-class neighborhood and push tenants out.

Opponents found the number especially egregious because residents in Boyle Heights have historically suffered some of the worst housing discrimination in Los Angeles. The organizers first rallied at Hollenbeck Park and then marched up to Councilmember Kevin de Leon’s office and the Boyle Heights City Hall, planning to rally there before marching further to Cesar Chavez Avenue.

Thousands of renters, community members, and activists, [according to local media](#), gathered for a peaceful demonstration of community solidarity in the face of the worsening economic dynamics of the city, particularly the untenable rise of rents that have forced so many in and around the neighborhood to leave their homes, and the gentrification that often prevents them from returning.

The demands of the community, LATU, and UDV were simple:

- Stop all evictions.
- Stop all rent increases.
- Stop all demolitions.
- Stop all reductions of services and new charges.
- Safe and sanitary housing.
- We want to live in peace.
- We want to live in good conditions.
- Enforcement of our rights.
- Accommodations for disabled and elderly people.
- Respect.

The tenants and community members planned to officially deliver these demands in front of de Leon’s office. Unfortunately, officers from the Los Angeles Police Department’s (LAPD) Hollenbeck Division were unable to deal with the assembly of tenants peacefully.

At just after 11, as the march reached Boyle Heights City Hall, the office of Kevin de Leon, and speeches were given to the crowd of tenants out front, around a dozen LAPD officers suddenly attacked the peaceful rally and attempted to arrest attendees mid-

speech. After a swift and resilient community response to the brutality on display, the police retreated back into LAPD's Hollenbeck Station.

The organizers then led the march up to Cesar Chavez Ave., where they held another portion of the rally, still chanting the demands of the tenants and community, before marching down the historic strip of the neighborhood, where they passed the site of the six-story development proposed by the Tiao Corporation, which is currently occupied by community-owned businesses, and which residents have started a [petition](#) against.

As the march made its way through, many members of the community came out to support the march, some sounding noisemakers off their balconies to the marchers below in solidarity. Members of UNITE HERE Local 11 are currently on strike in the Los Angeles area, with housing issues part of their demands, showing affordability is an issue for the whole working class in the area.

The lack of city and county protections for residents being priced out and communities being gentrified is creating a larger problem. Now, several organizations—from labor unions to tenants unions—are taking up the struggle for good living conditions, an end to evictions, and respect.

3. CPUSA Participates in Effort to Win Sanctuary City Law in Los Angeles

Originally published in People's World on November 25, 2024.

Just after the 2024 election that saw Donald Trump win a second non-consecutive term, there was already mass organizing in preparation for Project 2025 and mass deportations (read: kidnappings). A coalition, led by CHIRLA and supported by unions and the Communist Party USA, was vital in that initial step to attempt to circumvent municipal support of fascist kidnappings. The sanctuary city ordinance may not have had the desired impact, but it led to organizations sustaining coalition work beyond the election.

LOS ANGELES—On the campaign trail, Donald Trump vowed to launch the “largest deportation program in American history” on day one of his presidency. With less than two months to go before he takes office, the immigrant rights movement is not waiting around to mobilize the resistance effort. On Nov. 19, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to pass a city ordinance that would make L.A. a sanctuary city. The ordinance passed with amendments and will need a finalizing vote in the first week of December.

Members of the Communist Party USA from around Los Angeles County, led by CPUSA National Co-Chair Rossana Cambron, joined the coalition pushing for the measure in downtown street demonstrations earlier this month. The broad alliance advocating L.A.’s designation as a sanctuary city includes SEIU 721, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights L.A. (CHIRLA), DSA, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, ACLU SoCal, United Teachers of Los Angeles, and others.

The rapid increase in public and mass pressure after Trump's election win pushed city officials to expedite the measure's preliminary passing.

Former Mayor Eric Garcetti in 2019 signed an [executive action](#)¹ to protect immigrants and migrants but refused to push a city law on the matter. In 2023, the city council voted for a sanctuary city law to be written and voted on within 60 days, but there was little to no movement since then until the mass pressure from broad coalitions. Mayor Karen Bass [said](#)² that she didn't know the city had no laws protecting immigrants; it will now. The semi-passed law will deny federal authorities like ICE access to city databases and resources.

However, the new district attorney and LAPD chief, Nathan Hochman and Jim McDonnell respectively, are far-right figures who have promised to go after imaginary crime increases and immigrant community members. McDonnell was selected by Bass, who [remarked](#) at the time she nominated him that he was a "leader, innovator, and change maker." His appointment was approved by city council 11-2. Bruno Huizar of the California Immigrant Policy Center gave a conflicting report, "We strongly oppose McDonnell's appointment due to his prior history of colluding with ICE."

Trump is proposing massive deportations of immigrants and U.S. citizens, urged along ideologically by the Heritage Foundation. Project 2025, written by Heritage, has laid out detailed plans for deporting tens of millions of people. The person who wrote those plans, [Tom Homan](#), is Trump's pick for border czar. Los Angeles, home to many immigrants, is thus set to occupy a central role in the fight that's about to unfold. Angelica Salas of CHIRLA reported that [80% of families](#) in the region have

¹ Wait, Tom. "LA City Council to consider adopting "sanctuary city" ordinance." *CBS News*, CBS, <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/la-city-council-to-consider-adopting-sanctuary-city-ordinance/>.

² Chou, Elizabeth. 2024. "What you've missed recently in Los Angeles politics, Nov. 14 issue." *LA Public Press*. <https://lapublicpress.org/2024/11/la-politics-roundup-budget-mcdonnell-trump-organize/>.

an immigrant in the family; Trump's proposals to go after that community thus affect millions.

4. Community Self-Defense Coalition in Los Angeles Forms Against Fascism

Originally published in Red Star Tribune on April 3, 2025

LOS ANGELES—Over a thousand people and representatives from over 60 organizations marched through the streets of downtown on February 17—Presidents’ Day—from Olvera Street to Los Angeles City Hall and back in response to President Trump’s fascist campaign against immigrants and migrants across America.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have already [announced](#) they have arrested nearly 200 people in the L.A. County area, and the rumored threat of more [“large-scale”](#) operations coming soon looms over the immigrant community in the region.

In response to these events and the history of others, community members first gathered at the Plaza Olvera, the historic center of the old Pueblo, starting the morning off with a rally with several speakers from the endorsing organizations. Soon, the large, diverse crowd of around 1,000 with a myriad of different national flags prepared themselves to march down Alameda Street before holding another brief speaking segment in front of the Metropolitan Detention Center, a federal holding facility that flanks the Roybal Federal Building.

The march then took a turn and marched through Little Tokyo, while referencing the treatment of the Japanese-American community during the 1940s, proclaiming that they “will never let [ethnic cleansing] happen again to our neighbors,” and landed at the steps of City Hall to protest directly at the doorstep of the institution which they say has failed to do its job of protecting the vulnerable immigrant community.

Many organizers and speakers of the march spoke of feeling that the city and county political establishment are capitulating to Trump’s Project 2025 and not using the recent Sanctuary City [ordinance](#) to halt these ICE raids.

Due to the perceived lack of protection offered by the municipal government, a new coalition has formed among several community organizations to protect their communities from local and federal law enforcement agencies' efforts to rip apart families. The Community Self-Defense Coalition of Los Angeles (CSDC) [formed](#) in the last two weeks with over 60 organizations having signed on and endorsed its mission.

Including Centro C.S.O., chapters of Jewish Voices for Peace and Students for Justice in Palestine, Union de Barrio, the National Lawyers Guild, the L.A. Hands Off Cuba Committee, Black Alliance for Peace, the Rosemead Tenants Union, the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, and dozens more. The coalition is also seeking to extend to other communities in Southern California with large immigrant populations. The “Points of Unity” for the coalition are as follows, as listed on the coalition’s Instagram page:

- End police & ICE terrorism in our communities! NO to Raids, Deportations & family separation!
- Money for Public Education and Social Services! Not Fascism or Genocide!
- End US intervention in Nuestra America, Africa, Asia, Middle East
- Close ALL Concentration Camps (Immigration Detention facilities, Prisons)
- We will NOT collaborate with ICE, police, sheriffs.
- This Land belongs to Indigenous people; (Tongva, Kizh, Chumash, all original protectors of the land)
- We will struggle for Self-Determination for ALL oppressed people and our future generations!

Community organizer Gabriel Quiroz Jr. of Centro C.S.O. out of Boyle Heights, when interviewed about the coalition his organization helped found, remarked that it was “formed to protect our Raza from these racist right-wing attacks on our people, the constant executive orders and talks about mass deportations are a direct attack on our Raza,” and was confident that the Chicano/Latin community would, “stand up and fight back.”

The coalition has organized community patrols “in Boyle Heights and East Los investigating reports of ICE Activity and talking with and informing our Raza of their rights,” and seeks to establish branches of the coalition in other communities in Southern California where immigrant communities are at risk, currently seeking to build coalitions in San Diego and the Inland Empire in addition to Los Angeles. Several community patrols have publicized encounters with ICE and law enforcement warding community members away from them and generally peacefully harassing the ICE agents until they leave the respective neighborhoods. So far, it has not escalated into armed self-defense like in a [similar situation](#) in Lincoln Heights.

As the far-right continues to escalate and neoliberal politicians continue to capitulate in LA, the clash between immigrant and migrant-based communities and law enforcement will only increase. The rise of coalitions such as the Community Self-Defense Coalition in Los Angeles proves the organizing potential of the immigrant and migrant communities, as well as the wider progressive movements’ ability to unify in the face of fascist repression.

5. Los Angeles March Draws Hundreds in Solidarity with Palestine and Immigrant Community

Originally published in People's World on April 4, 2025, co-authored by Danny Estrada. This march and rally was in the suburbs of southeast Los Angeles, historically not a politically active area. But with the new Trump regime, and building off struggles for Palestine and labor, the suburbs of LA have been active throughout the second Trump term in ways they weren't during the initial presidency. This is already months after the start of ICE raids, picking up in frequency in California, but before the surge in the summer of 2025.

HUNTINGTON PARK, Calif.—Increasing pressure from Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and local police forces in the southeast Los Angeles community of Huntington Park is leading to growing class consciousness and community organizing in the neighborhood. On March 22, hundreds rallied in Salt Lake Park in the name of solidarity with immigrants and Palestinians before marching down Florence and then historic Pacific Boulevard on the way to Huntington Park City Hall.

The Pacific Boulevard stretch is the third highest-grossing commercial district in Los Angeles County and one of the most heavily influenced by immigrant Latino culture. Huntington Park's population is 97% Hispanic/Latino, with about half being born outside the United States.

The recently renamed Richard Castro Jr. Club of Southeast Los Angeles, Communist Party USA (CPUSA), joined over a dozen

organizations to rally for “Grand March,” including Mexico’s Morena (Movimiento de Regeneracion Nacional) party, UTLA, Teamsters Mobilize, Youth for Environmental Justice Southeast Los Angeles, the Harriet Tubman Center, Communities for a Better Environment, Mobilize for Immigrants, Labor for Palestine, the Peace and Freedom Party, Midnight Books, the East Los Angeles Brown Bears, People’s Struggle San Fernando Valley, the Educators Defense Network, the Stop LASD Spying coalition, and Long Beach Banner Drop for Palestine.

Despite a lack of more substantial labor support, the march was co-organized and endorsed by supporters of Mexico’s ruling Morena Party, currently led by popular Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum. Establishing organizational ties and practices across the US/Mexico border is a clear escalation of the international struggle in response to Trump’s fascist immigration policy.

It will have to be seen how activists in support of immigrants in America engaging in dialogue with progressive forces in the home countries of many immigrants will impact the struggle here, as the potential for such connections appears to be massive. The rally took on more internationalist tones by connecting the struggle against immigrants to the genocide against Palestine. The slogans promoting the event featured “Stop deportations” and “Liberate Palestine.” Organizers called for an end to ICE presence in Huntington Park and the greater southeast Los Angeles area alongside calls for peace and an end to the genocide in Palestine.

Danny Lopez, with the Peace and Freedom Party and co-organizer for the rally, commented that he would like to “see more” labor participation in the southeast part of the county. When asked why Huntington Park was selected for the march instead of more traditional activist hubs like Boyle Heights or downtown Los Angeles, he responded that this area has been “historically ignored” by activists and organizers. However, he notes that “Trump’s moves at the national level are having [local] collaboration efforts [with] the Huntington Park Police Department.”

As the Trump Administration continues to escalate its war on immigrants—documented and undocumented—activists in the communities that will be hit hardest are already organizing the working class to combat the offensive. At the march, as at many actions recently, organizers handed out red “know-your-rights” cards to bystanders, which reminded individuals of their rights when dealing with federal and local officers. The community received the march in kind, with many patrons, employees, and small business owners coming out to ring bells and wave flags in support of the march and of their fellow community members as they marched down Pacific, some even joining the demonstration.

Local educator and community organizer Aaron Reveles also spoke at the event, saying the “political corruption” of the smaller Los Angeles County cities can’t be ignored. He continued that the “political struggle” must be had in these smaller localities as well as in the Los Angeles metro or Long Beach areas. Organizers continued to stress the importance of the southeast region of Los Angeles County, as a large swath of working-class and immigrant-descended neighborhoods typically forgotten by government and capital.

6. ‘Hands Off!’ Call-to-Action Organizes Largest Protest in Lakewood History

Originally published in People’s World on April 7, 2025

LAKWOOD, Calif.—The national Hands Off event on April 5 led to mass rallies and protests across the country. With the fascist onslaught against social services and working class rights, organizers in the suburb of Lakewood pulled off a historic protest. In perhaps the largest protest in Lakewood city history, over 4,000 people crowded both sides of the street outside the city hall and Los Angeles Sheriff Department station.

Lakewood Indivisible organized the rally, and when interviewed by People’s World, the lead organizer, Heather Rodriguez, said, “It’s a lot more people than we expected, but we know that people are passionate, and everybody cares about something that’s being threatened by this administration. So there’s a lot of people that have a grievance and a lot of people that want to be here and help protest.”

The city of Lakewood is best known for the “Lakewood Plan,” which was a suburban development plan that pioneered our current non-walkable cities built around shopping malls. Most importantly, as detailed in Mike Davis’s *City of Quartz*, Lakewood was one of the key sites of “white flight” from downtown and west Los Angeles. The city made a deal with the county supervisors to “contract its vital services...at cut-rate prices.”

The genius of this idea is that it would be financed by a regressive sales tax instead of progressive property taxes. So with zoning out “service-demanding low-income residents and renting population,” the Lakewood Plan safeguarded petty-bourgeois,

mainly white, property from Black and Brown people. Gary Miller in *Cities By Contract* referred to the Lakewood Plan as a “revolt of the rich against the poor.”

However, the dynamics of Lakewood have shifted since its inception. For example, in 1970, the population was 98.5% white—today, it’s down to 31%. The majority of the city is now multi-racial and multi-national. Also, about one out of ten people are over the age of 65 and are eligible for social security, and one out of five were born outside the United States.

Heather Rodriguez, when asked about the importance of a suburb like Lakewood now experiencing class struggle, said, “I think that there’s been a lot of groups of people that have been historically ignored. I think we see a lot of people here that are older, that are senior citizens, who are at risk for having their medical [benefits] cut, their social security cut, a lot of these things that we rely on. And I think it’s easy to think that being in a suburb, people are very settled and not very many activists. But these people are so passionate about it as well. Sometimes they just need a rallying cry to get everybody active.”

One of the critiques from the left of the Hands Off event messaging was the focus on “Hands Off NATO” and the lack of focus on the U.S. and Israeli genocide against Palestine. When asked about this criticism, Rodriguez responded, “...You don’t have to mire yourself in debates over different people’s techniques. You can just say that there [are] people suffering in Palestine, and they need to be protected, and genocide is wrong no matter who’s perpetrating it. I think that’s a massive misstep for a lot of these more center-left groups. Indivisible’s national stance is to support Palestine.”

Thousands of people mobilized in a historically suburban and petty-bourgeois community because Trump is attacking the working class and oppressed peoples. New mass organizations like Lakewood Indivisible have formed and are starting to bridge this geographical gap in organizing in Los Angeles.

As Rodriguez said, “If you are interested in doing something like this in your hometown, start it. Join another [organization] if you can. Make one of your own.”

The city of Lakewood has never seen class struggle to this degree, showing there's rising consciousness among people and communities that wasn't there before—is a new qualitative stage of the struggle approaching?

7. Emergency Summit Against Deportations in Los Angeles calls for ‘United Resistance’ to Trump

Originally published in People’s World on April 15, 2025

BOYLE HEIGHTS, Calif.—Dozens of organizations and hundreds of activists gathered in historic East Los Angeles to convene the Emergency Southwest Summit Against Deportations. The mass coalition Legalization For All initiated the two-day Summit in the wake of Donald Trump’s continued attacks on the immigrant community.

The Department of Homeland Security [told](#) Newsweek that over 100,000 deportations have taken place already this year under Trump’s second term. For comparison, in Biden’s last year, he deported 271,000 people—the highest in about a decade. If these numbers are correct, Trump’s on his way to beating that decade record number from last year. There have also been over [600 students](#) who’ve had their visas revoked—mainly targeting Palestinian solidarity organizers.

Locally, it was [reported](#) on April 10 that two ICE agents had attempted to gain access to elementary school students under the false pretence of conducting a wellness check. The school’s staff and educators denied them access and were taught Know-Your-Right procedures by Summit co-organizers Union del Barrio.

Other organizations featured were: co-organizer Centro CSO, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), Teamsters, Black Lives Matter Los Angeles, Oakland Alliance Against Police Repression, La Meza Nacional de Brown Berets, Silicon Valley

Immigration Committee, Students for a Democratic Society, Committee for Solidarity with People of El Salvador, Portland Contra la Deportaciones, Pierce County Immigration Community, Migrante, Proyecto Pastoral, Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee, Eagle Pass Border Coalition, and more.

The Summit featured guest speakers such as famed immigration rights activist Elvira Arellano, labor and immigrant rights organizer Angelica Reyes, and Luna Baez, the daughter of currently imprisoned Jennette Vizguerra.

There were also panel discussions on coalition building, grassroots organizing, building solidarity, and organizing the fight against the Trump administration. There were workshops on community defense tactics, developing rapid response networks, fighting deportations, working towards sanctuary status, and organizing for May Day. Cultural performances in poetry readings by Viva Padilla, East Los Soul, and a Know-Your-Right skit performance by Teatro de Centro CSO also occurred.

The delegates from the organizations voted on two major resolutions. The first condemned the “anti-immigrant attacks and mass deportations” under Trump while calling for “united resistance” to “defend each other from all forms of state repression.” Ultimately, it calls for a commitment to “organizing, educating, and mobilizing in our communities” to develop “networks of resistance—community defense, rapid response, and grassroots organizing to confront these attacks...”

Finally, the second resolution called for a “powerful, united presence in the streets on May Day as we march for immigrant rights and workers’ dignity.” Finishing with “No human being is illegal! No more deportations! No more raids! Legalization for All!”

8. Los Angeles Rebellion of 2025: What Does it Mean?

Originally published in Red Star Tribune on June 10, 2025

"Insurrection is an art quite as much as war... The first rule is never to play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences."— Friedrich Engels, The Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany (1852)

There is much discussion about what exactly the anti-ICE protests are becoming—isolated protests, local uprising, or the start of something far more eventful. This recent episode of resistance to fascism started on June 4 when ICE and Border Patrol arrested 200 immigrants, mostly at regularly scheduled court appearances or interviews. It has now spiraled into organized and spontaneous community defense and direct action throughout Southern California.

The community of Paramount was able to isolate and block a Border Patrol and ICE raid for a whole day. Clashes in Compton, San Diego, Little Tokyo, and other places have become more common. There's also been Homeland Security, FBI, California National Guard, and Marines sent in to help local police and ICE continue the raids and try to quell the now constant mass protests and community defense actions.

We have seen instances of people erecting barricades, throwing Molotov cocktails, and getting into skirmishes with the violent police who have been indiscriminately shooting "less lethals" rounds at peaceful protesters, women, children, and the elderly.

The fascist violence, terrorism, kidnappings, and now attempted military occupation of Los Angeles and Southern California are the foundation of this uprising. The mainstream

media and politicians like Karen Bass will want to continue to demonize the “violent” protests and act like the pigs are just reacting to the rightfully angry community while supporting the LAPD shooting people.

"To delay the uprising now would be fatal. History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could win today (and will certainly win today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything." — Lenin, Letter to the Central Committee (October 24, 1917)

All solidarity and support must be given to the organizations on the ground leading the struggle—Community Self-Defense Coalition, Union del Barrio, Centro CSO, and so many others (most of them in the coalition). Now is not the time to give ground to fascist violence and rhetoric. This is the start of a long struggle for liberation, justice, and freedom. All power to the people!

9. Lessons from the Los Angeles Uprising of 2025: Diversity of Tactics and Strategy

Originally published in Red Star Tribune on June 23, 2025

“The struggle is my life. I will continue fighting for freedom until the end of my days. But we must recognize that tactics must be adapted to conditions—sometimes negotiations, sometimes mass mobilization, and, when necessary, armed resistance.”
— Nelson Mandela, *Conversations with Myself* (2010)

LOS ANGELES—President Donald Trump’s assault on the migrant and immigrant communities of Los Angeles has passed the 100-day mark, syncopated by relentless Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol raids on workplaces and homes. Since June 6, the Trump administration has kidnapped 4,163 people across the L.A. area, according to public [data](#) released on Aug. 6. With the military takeover of the city, via federalized National Guardsmen and Marines, L.A. has become Ground Zero for the current anti-fascist struggle that expanded into Washington D.C., and which is now encroaching on Chicago and other cities.

Dozens have now been murdered and wounded by ICE this year, with that number most likely to rise by the time this is released. And at the point of production for this documentary, a reported 1,800 people are missing from the ICE concentration camp in Florida alone. Thousands of people have been kidnapped and disappeared.

[Jaime Alanís Garcia](#) was killed in a raid in Ventura County farmland, falling nearly 30 feet to his death. Day laborer [Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez](#) was killed in an ICE raid at a Monrovia

Home Depot location. In an act of collaboration with the federal government, L.A. District Attorney Nathan Hochman [charged](#) 71 people with crimes at anti-ICE protests, with one, [Adrienne Villa](#), a resident of the city's long-standing "Skid Row" homeless neighborhood, receiving 14 charges and an unaffordable \$1.33 million bail.

Villa was soon found hanged in her cell in June, only several hours after her arrest, but the details of her death were only disclosed by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department in August. She is the first anti-ICE protester to die in police custody. The FBI also [raided](#) and harassed organizers with the Centro Community Service Organization (CSO) in connection with charges filed against Alejandro Orellana, an East L.A. activist who handed out face shields to demonstrators.

It has become clear that a diversity of tactics is necessary for the struggle against capitalism, imperialism, and fascism. Regardless of the legality or perceived "illegality" of these respective tactics and strategies, police and fascist repression have been a through-line across the board.

*"We must be flexible; we must be able to employ the most varied methods of struggle, adapting them to changing conditions. At one moment, we must emphasize legal work, at another, illegal work—but always with the aim of strengthening the revolution."
— Vladimir Lenin, "Left-Wing"
Communism: An Infantile Disorder (1920)*

What's the right response? How do other areas prepare? Which tactics should you and the organization you're in pick up? How can we organize this resistance to push back and launch a successful offensive against Capital? These are all prescient questions for organizers and revolutionaries in the belly of the beast.

“Peaceful” Protests and Mass Mobilizations

“The revolutionary must master all forms of struggle—from legal parliamentary activity to clandestine work, from economic strikes to armed uprising—and be ready to shift swiftly from one to another as conditions demand.” —Joseph Stalin, “Concerning Questions of Leninism” (1926)

From the No Kings protests to the ANSWER Coalition, we’ve seen massive “peaceful” protests throughout the county. Mass mobilizations from SEIU after their union president was arrested by federal Gestapo, to IBEW, UTLA, and other local unions have also been a semi-consistent trend over this current period of struggle.

There has been much discussion and debate, as there always is with this particular tactic, over its efficacy. There’s the obvious concern about political movements being co-opted into political theatrics with these events—the idea that political momentum gets sapped by less-than-dubious figures, especially in the case of the No Kings “organizers,” is not entirely out of the question. In the same way, we must be concerned by state or non-state agent provocateurs at these protests; we should be concerned about the ruling class co-opting our movement.

These types of NGO- or bourgeois-funded events largely involve mobilizing those who are not organized, liberal/progressive in their ideology, and overall not perceived as “revolutionary.” However, it usually involves mass mobilization of the general community. As we will get to, the organized or spontaneous, more radical actions usually draw a far smaller crowd. The Mayor’s office said only 30,000 people showed up to the No Kings rally in LA, but on the ground, it seemed significantly bigger. If I had to estimate, it was over 50,000. And across the country, it was 4-6 million people.

The idea that these crowds that don’t materialize from thin air—they must come from our communities—can not be organized

and are stuck in liberal politics is a defeatist attitude. It's not so much a "meet the people where they are" as it is; these are people clearly wanting political resistance. It's up to us as communists and organizers to create the infrastructure for that energy to shift from tailist tendencies. The reality of Democratic and capital co-opting of the Black Lives Matter movement, Occupy, etc., is not proof these millions of people are hopelessly stuck—it's proof we have still failed to meet the moment of struggle we are facing collectively.

Ironically, the bourgeois backing of the No Kings rally did not protect the "peaceful" protesters from LAPD and LASD shooting them with "less lethal" rounds four hours before the curfew. Peacefully protesting ICE kidnappings and fascist military occupation still leads to mass state repression. Mayor Karen Bass, who repeatedly has denounced the ICE raids and called for peaceful protests, still called in police gangs to shoot those peaceful protesters. It's clear that with the fascist assault on this city and county that Democratic political leadership will collaborate while lying about that reality.

Could that repression and collaboration drive those liberal-minded working class people who attend the next No Kings rally more prepared to get organized? And what are we doing to create the space for those people to get radicalized and trained for the struggle?

Labor's mass mobilizations for this have been underwhelming outside of the SEIU rally after David Huerta, the president of the California division of the Service Employees International Union, was arrested and charged with [conspiracy](#). But there are unions like the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) that have strong connections to the Community Self-Defense Coalition, and massive overlap in union rank and file with community and radical organizations in the city. Let alone unions like UFW, UNITE HERE, and others being largely filled with Latino/a workers and immigrants.

This attack on the immigrant and Latino/a community is going to hit the labor movement hard, regardless of where these unions' national leadership lands ideologically. So there is massive

potential for radical action from the labor movement in this struggle that is a natural carryover from years of labor struggles in Los Angeles.

There have also been mass mobilizations from traditional and more liberal immigrant rights groups like The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA). They spearheaded the Sanctuary City ordinance being passed in preparation for this current period and have mobilized for protests sporadically throughout the last couple of weeks in direct response to the ICE raids. However, it must be stated that the Sanctuary City ordinance has completely failed to protect our communities. The law was supposed to stop LAPD and city infrastructure from helping ICE and Border Patrol; however, all the experience on the ground has shown they collaborate to terrorize the city, and new [reporting](#) shows they are sharing resources to assist directly in ICE kidnappings.

But it's not just these traditional organizations leading mass mobilizations and protests in response to this fascist assault. The aforementioned Community Self-Defense Coalition (CSDC), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL)/ANSWER Coalition, and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) have all led mass protests in response to and in preparation for this struggle. There's been a resurgence of the Chicano movement as well, and that can't be ignored. Union del Barrio and Centro CSO, both Chicano community organizations with socialist and communist leanings and connections, have been instrumental in mass mobilizations in South Central, downtown, and East LA barrios. Also, as we will see later in the article, they have been key in other tactical approaches.

Mutual Aid

"The goal of socialism is not only to abolish the present division of [humanity]...but to replace competition with solidarity." – Vladimir Lenin, The Socialist Revolution

and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination (1916)

Another tactic that has been deployed and expanded is mutual aid networks and efforts. This attack on the immigrant community in Los Angeles has caused mass amounts of people to stay home, not go to work, avoid doctors' appointments, and [hide](#) from this fascist terror. There has been a concerted effort from organizers to make sure people stay fed and secure materially throughout this, which has to be replicated in other places when the state infrastructure completely fails the community.

Groups like Mutual Aid LA, Midnight Books, All Power, and others have been dedicated to the distribution of supplies to protesters and community members. Centro CSO member [Alejandro Orellana](#) was raided by the FBI, arrested, and charged with “conspiracy to commit criminal disorders” after giving out masks during a protest to protect community members and peaceful protesters from police shooting rubber bullets.

There have already been many cases over the last few weeks of protesters and media being hurt by rubber bullets and going to the hospital. We are now seeing mutual aid be criminally persecuted along with protesters. This threat against Centro CSO should be a rallying cry for other organizations to mobilize when necessary in solidarity, lend legal aid, and provide more forms of mutual aid support.

Rapid Response Networks & Community Patrols

"The weapon of theory is as decisive as the theory of weapons. But while we must be ready to fight with arms, we must also fight with culture, education, and political mobilization. The enemy uses many forms of domination; we must respond with many forms of resistance."

— Amilcar Cabral, *"The Weapon of Theory"* (1966)

One of the most essential and expanding tactics is the rapid response networks that have developed as a result of the increasing ICE raids. The Community Self-Defense Coalition has over 80 member organizations including Union del Barrio (UdB), Centro CSO, AUSIIME Collective, Association of Educators-LA, Black Alliance for Peace Social, Black Men Build, Educator Defense Network, Jewish Voice for Peace, Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Anakbayan, National Lawyers Guild, UAW 4811, If Not Now, LA Street Care, Raza Unida Party, People's Struggle SFV, CPUSA Southeast LA, MECha's throughout the area, and dozens of other organizations and locals.

Groups like Union del Barrio, People's Struggle, and Centro were instrumental in setting up the rapid response network infrastructure that the rest of the coalition partners are trained in and then become an active part of the regional networks. There are hundreds of organizers and activists responding to calls of ICE deployments, educating the community on their rights when approached by federal and police authorities, and setting up routine patrols to search for ICE and Border Patrol groups. Centralized communication and hotlines across almost the entire Los Angeles organizing spaces have become essential to quickly respond to these ICE kidnappings. The rapid response network and connected community patrols are the backbone of the entire resistance to this fascist occupation and violation of our neighborhoods. There's a reason why fascist Senator Josh Hawley is trying to launch investigations into Union del Barrio and CHIRLA—another organization with a rapid response network. UdB [responded](#) to the letter from the senator:

“Mr. Hawley’s June 11th letter claims that Unión del Barrio provided “logistical and financial resources... aiding and abetting criminal conduct...” To be clear, Unión del Barrio has not organized, aided, abetted, financed, or engaged in any illegal activity, and we reject Mr. Hawley’s notion that we are somehow responsible for “lawless mob actions.”

Clearly, the objective of Mr. Hawley's letter was to intimidate us and compel Unión del Barrio to stop organizing the self-defense of our communities, to silence our communities into submission, and to rewrite history as to who are the actual violent criminals behind these events...Anyone who cares to pay attention has witnessed how these protests were rooted in a rapidly growing number of intentionally cruel, increasingly violent, militarized immigration operations across the United States.

These Los Angeles protests took place as a direct response to the ongoing 159-day colonial reign of terror unleashed by the federal government of the United States against La Raza...Unión del Barrio is a disciplined organization with a politically united membership that acts collectively, not as individuals. Our members participated and continue to participate in protests throughout the LA area and Southern California. Furthermore, we intend to play a leading role in a national movement against ICE/migra attacks.

Unión del Barrio has already provided an effective model for community self-defense, and we are putting our theories into practice. We have informed our members and supporters of the situation, and we have instructed them to remain on high alert in response to ongoing ICE/migra repression. However, we will remain steadfast. Unión del Barrio will continue to expand, strengthen, and increase our community-centered barrio-facing work, such as our Community Patrols and our youth, prisoner, worker, and mujer-centered projects to build dual and contending power.”

Other groups like the Harbor Area Peace Patrols and the aforementioned Long Beach Rapid Response Network have been

a natural outgrowth of both the Coalition and the effectiveness of community patrols. The former being the key watch for all ICE vehicles leaving Terminal Island—a common staging ground—and the Long Beach collective being the frontline of all ICE movement from Terminal Island. It is unknown how many lives have been in effect saved by these patrollers, but the number is in the thousands after 100 days.

In any struggle, it's imperative to know where the enemy is, what the balance of forces is, and where to concentrate your forces. The rapid response networks and community patrols are the first line of defense and information gathering, which is vital to this resistance movement. We have to know where the fascists are and where they are gathering strength so we can do the same to counter that invasion in our communities.

Community Defense and Blocking ICE Raids

"The guerrilla fighter is like a fish in water, and the water is the people. Without the people's support, the armed struggle is doomed. But without the armed struggle, the people's resistance remains fragmented and easily crushed." —Amilcar Cabral, Unity and Struggle (1974, posthumous compilation)

A natural outgrowth of the Know-Your-Rights neighborhood and workplace education, community patrols, and the rapid response network's rising social media reach is the spontaneous clashes with the police and federal authorities. There have now been numerous occasions, such as in Paramount, Compton, Bell, and other places, where the community has spontaneously reacted to ICE raids. Some resulted in ICE and federal agents being blocked in by the community trying to defend their friends and family from being kidnapped and disappeared. Others resulted in quick clashes where the ICE was able to get away.

Community defense actions in Paramount and Compton in particular lasted well over 12 hours with wave after wave of people trying to get closer to ICE's battle formations while being shot at,

tear-gassed, and clubbed. Barricades were set up and items burned—classic revolutionary guerrilla tactics that were again, spontaneously developed in these instances.

"The Moscow uprising thrust the barricades into the forefront. But the barricades were of little use... The barricade is not a fortress; it is only a hindrance to the troops. The insurgents must not remain passive behind the barricades, but attack relentlessly." — Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 11, p. 174

As Lenin clearly stated lessons learned from the failed 1905 Russian Revolution is that this type of street combat between police and the community is defensive. It's not an offensive tactic to set up barricades and try to block ICE raids. These are attempts at community defense, revolutionary, yes, but not organized offensive insurrection. That's just not what's happening on the ground. The Los Angeles uprising is one centered on community self-defense. What continues to develop could change that reality, though.

Armed Struggle?

"It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle... I do not deny that I planned sabotage. I did not plan it in a spirit of recklessness, nor because I have any love of violence. I planned it as a result of a calm and sober assessment of the political situation that had arisen after many years of tyranny, exploitation, and oppression of my people by the whites." — Nelson Mandela Statement from the Dock at the Rivonia Trial (1964)

Los Angeles and Southern California have historically been a key center of armed struggle and community defense in the

class struggle in the US. Los Angeles is also a site of settler colonial genocide and resistance. In 1827, for example, there was a massive revolt of the Chumash nation against the settlers of the area. Throughout Spanish, Mexican, and American colonial occupation, Indigenous resistance has been a constant. California was also a brutal site of “triple slavery” of Indigenous, African, and Chinese people being enslaved in the region at a concurrent time. California governors has explicitly called for Indigenous genocide and “wars of extermination.” Capitalists in LA shipped gold to the South during the Civil War as the “Los Angeles Mounted Rifles,” a proto-fascist militia similar to the KKK, would rally in the streets.

Mass lynchings and massacres by white settlers against oppressed groups were a key feature of California throughout the 19th century. But California also would be an early and vibrant place for socialist thought and activity from the late 19th century onward. Utopian socialist colonies like the Kaweah and Llano del Rio Colonies were dotting the southland from the 1880s.

In 1932, in response to rising fascist gangs both locally and internationally, Communist Party USA leader Ben Dobbs recommended that the Young Communist League in Los Angeles should become a “semi-military organization,” in direct response. Party members were trained in Moscow for revolutionary guerrilla action, such as how to build barricades and Molotovs. 20 years later, the entire leadership of CPUSA in California was on trial for the Smith Act.

There were mass popular uprisings like in Watts in 1965 which historian Gerald Horne said “marked the moment when the ideological baton in Black America moved westward...” And after the Watts Rebellion, the Community Alert Patrols formed in LA. Similar to the anti-ICE patrols of today, community members would patrol and “protect and observe” in the community against police brutality. It was born out of and from community members organizing in the Communist Party associated Hugh Gordon Bookstore. And the organization of the Community Alert Patrols was a direct harbinger to the Black Panther Party and the Black Power movement to follow.

Between groups like the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army, Weather Underground, and more, there were 2500 bombings in the US from 1971-1972 alone. Police shootouts with revolutionaries from the Bay area to San Diego were not uncommon, as at least two dozen Panthers were killed by cops during its brief history. During the first half of 1969, there were at least ten armed police and FBI raids on the Black Panthers, most notably the assault on the headquarters in Los Angeles.

There was international military aid given to Black Revolutionaries in that period from the anti-imperialist and socialist blocs: Algiers, Palestine, Cuba, Vietnam, and Czechoslovakia. Jonathan Jackson's armed assault on the courtroom in Marin County became a societal lightning rod. Likewise, the murder of his imprisoned brother George Jackson in San Quentin prison sparked revolts across the country. This led to the infamous trial of former Black Panther and at that time, current Communist Party member and UCLA professor, Angela Davis.

A recent study said, "No Panther branch or chapter experienced more harassment and suffered more casualties than the L.A. Panthers...being a Panther in Los Angeles meant putting one's [life] in peril on a daily basis." Panther co-founder Bobby Seale said the LAPD would "shoot up our free clinic...they shot it up so much that the doctors and nurses...some 7 or 8 of them that were donating their time down there, decided to leave, because they just got scared." Chicano leader Corky Gonzalez said California and Los Angeles were "the number one police state and city in United States history."

And in recent decades labor unions and tenants associations have been growing in militancy. The famous 2006 Day without an Immigrant protest that gathered a historic 500,000 people in protest in Los Angeles. As historian Gerald Horne wrote in his book *Armed Struggle*: "By mid-2023 one analyst adjudged accurately that 'Southern California unions and the working people they represent have become the vanguard of the American labor movement. About half of the big strikes in the U.S. this year,' said historian Nelson Lichtenstein, 'have taken place in California with the most consequential centered in Los Angeles.'" This city was

portrayed accurately as a “cockpit of labor militancy” as the “City of Angels is setting the pace for millions of working people across the nation.”

And then in late 2023 and through 2024, we had a militant movement in solidarity with Palestine primarily organized through the Palestinian Youth Movement as the vanguard in coalitions that culminated in the Student Intifada. Police and Zionist gang assaults on student encampments were widespread but most concentrated at UCLA.

There are lessons to be learned from all of this history. The lack of international material support in the later years of the Black Panther Party, due to Eldridge Cleaver’s eclecticism, shows that international aid and support are imperative if this shift from spontaneous community self-defense to organized armed struggle is to occur. One thing Los Angeles has demonstrated is that there is already mass community support for the current tactics on display.

There isn’t any real outrage here over ICE raids being blocked or some AI cars being burned. The rage is pointed at the fascist police and federal agents. Is the community enraged enough to support organized armed struggle? It’s impossible to tell, but the reality is that the current diversity of tactics is testing Los Angeles’s organizational logistical capacity.

“An insurrection must not be viewed as a spontaneous outburst, but as a carefully prepared and organized action. The art of insurrection demands the concentration of superior forces at the decisive moment and place.”— Joseph Stalin, Foundations of Leninism (1924)

We are clearly in a period of mass unrest and resistance to fascist aggression. Organizers are deploying all available tactics, and some organizations are employing multiple. From mass protests and mobilizations, mutual aid, community patrols, rapid response networks, know-your-rights education, and more, all are

building up community capacity for spontaneous direct action. Organizers in other areas need to develop similar Community Self-Defense Coalitions with radical and revolutionary collective leadership, and prepare infrastructure for the oncoming fascist repression.

Organizers must rapidly expand mutual aid networks, rapid response networks, and coalitions into permanent structures of dual power—community kitchens, medical collectives, and defense committees that outlast this wave of repression. The rapid response model must evolve into neighborhood assemblies capable of coordinating strikes, boycotts, and armed resistance when necessary.

The 1985 MOVE bombing, the 1965 and 1992 L.A. Rebellions, and the police assault on the Black Panther Party in Los Angeles prove the state's willingness to escalate to massacres. If armed struggle emerges, it must be disciplined, clandestine, and rooted in mass support—unlike the isolated actions that doomed the Weather Underground.

The last time we saw this level of armed struggle here, the US used Smith Act trials to arrest all state and local communist leaders, used COINTELPRO tactics to assassinate, disappear, and lay siege to communist organizers in the Black Panther Party, Chicano Movement, and CPUSA. Solidarity and material support are vital for community defense. Historian Gerald Horne [advised](#) organizers who may be going down the path of armed struggle that they:

“Should have an analysis...An analysis of the correlation of forces domestically—who will be our allies—who will be our antagonists? Above all, an international analysis. I hope they have been in touch with our comrades in Cuba...that they try to rally international support. That would be my only cautionary note... with regard to a replay of the 1960s and 1970s...The uniqueness of the Southland—proximity to Mexico; proliferation of colleges; serpentine freeways; brutal cops; an empowered ultra-right—also served to propel both the [communist movement]...the problem in the U.S. was an assessment of the correlation of forces

domestically and globally in light of the perniciousness of class collaboration that inhered in settler colonialism at home.”

10. Does L.A. offer a blueprint for resisting Trump's deportation onslaught?

Originally published on September 15, 2025, for People's World

LOS ANGELES—President Donald Trump's assault on the migrant and immigrant communities of Los Angeles has passed the 100-day mark, syncoated by relentless Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol raids on workplaces and homes. Since June 6, the Trump administration has kidnapped 4,163 people across the L.A. area, according to public data released on Aug. 6.

With the military takeover of the city, via federalized National Guardsmen and Marines, L.A. has become Ground Zero for the current anti-fascist struggle that expanded into Washington D.C., and which is now encroaching on Chicago and other cities.

Chicago saw its first ICE-linked death, with the shooting last Friday of Silverio Villegas-Gonzalez. He joins the list of three people have already lost their lives in connection with ICE raids and protests in the L.A. area.

Jaime Alanís Garcia was killed in a raid in Ventura County farmland, falling nearly 30 feet to his death. Day laborer Roberto Carlos Montoya Valdez was killed in an ICE raid at a Monrovia Home Depot location.

In an act of collaboration with the federal government, L.A. District Attorney Nathan Hochman charged 71 people with crimes at anti-ICE protests, with one, Adrienne Villa, a resident of the city's long-standing "Skid Row" homeless neighborhood, receiving 14 charges and an unaffordable \$1.33 million bail.

Villa was soon found hanged in her cell in June, only several hours after her arrest, but the details of her death were only

disclosed by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department in August. She is the first anti-ICE protester to die in police custody.

The FBI also raided and harassed organizers with the Centro Community Service Organization (CSO) in connection with charges filed against Alejandro Orellana, an East L.A. activist who handed out face shields to demonstrators.

Those specific charges were dropped, but state repression is increasing, and strategies and tactics to defend the community on the ground are being shared through the movement and with community members.

One of the key decisions organizers in L.A. made was not to wait for the worst of the immigration raids to start before they began organizing. ICE raids in California began on Jan. 7, when 65 Border Patrol agents arrested 80 farmworkers in Bakersfield. Immediately, groups including Union del Barrio (UdB), United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), Centro CSO, Immigrant Defenders Law Center, and dozens of other organizations formed the Community Self-Defense Coalition (CSDC), announcing themselves in a press conference in February of this year.

The same groups organized the Emergency Southwest Summit Against Deportations in April, which gathered organizers from across the country in L.A.'s historically Chicano-dominated East side to discuss how to defend communities from the current federal raids and terror. Various community organizations and activists formed stronger connections and plans for community defense and education in the face of President Donald Trump's open ambitions for mass deportations and other actions seen by many as steps to normalize fascism in the U.S.

There was widespread preparation in the wake of the first raids in California, which laid strong foundations that would be activated after June 6. "Know-Your-Rights" trainings for community members, educators, local small businesses, and more were, and still are, a regular occurrence. Community outreach was vital to building proper communication networks between activist-organizers and community members—flying,

tabling, rallies, protests, and more were also organized before June 6.

Federal agencies raided hundreds of locations across the Southland, taking an adversarial role against the city and its residents. Events such as the brief occupation of MacArthur Park one weekday afternoon in July largely seem oriented towards sowing fear in the community and demonstrating the power of the federal government against even the city and state governments of Los Angeles and California.

Since then, as the raids and kidnappings of community members became a daily constant, more groups have developed rapid response networks, community patrols, and legal defense measures. Groups like the Los Angeles branch of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), the Harbor Peace Patrols, and the Long Beach Rapid Response Networks have also developed tactics of community patrols, legal aid, and rapid response to raids which overlap with the activities of the CSDC.

These kinds of tactics have possibly staved off many ICE and Border Patrol kidnapping-style arrests. Many of those detained by Trump's administration have not been allowed contact with lawyers or family. Others have been denied their basic rights, and sometimes, in effect, disappeared by the state. That's why organizers in L.A. are often using the term "kidnappings" to describe the sweeps. With the recent Supreme Court decision to lift racial profiling restrictions on ICE and Border Patrol in Los Angeles, activists expect a return to mass kidnappings.

However, thousands of people in L.A. have been mobilized by this attack on their neighbors and loved ones, and the tactics and organizing happening there could serve as a blueprint for the struggles now happening in the nation's capital, in Chicago, and elsewhere.

The hope locally is that if the community in Los Angeles organizes itself consistently and strongly enough, it may cause the Trump administration to hesitate in its drive to encroach on other cities—especially if they know they'll get the same

pushback no matter where they go. The Republican Party and fascist MAGA movement have set their sights on the immigrant and migrant communities, exactly as they laid out in Project 2025. The time for the popular front to resist these assaults is now.

11. How to Resist ICE & Border Patrol? Rapid Response Networks & Community Defense

Originally published in Red Star Tribune on January 19, 2026

With the increase of fascistic violence from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its subsidiaries, Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol, and the growing federal occupation of U.S. cities, it is imperative for organizers to compile “How-To” guides to help others resist this oppression.

Comrades from Minneapolis have put out an excellent [breakdown](#)³ of their resistance model, and I [wrote](#) previously about the model in Los Angeles. However, my article did not go into the exact structures, how they formed, best practices, or policies. I hope to expand on the details provided from Minneapolis—which is quite close to the various models in LA—in the hopes it can benefit organizers in other places not yet targeted by Trump’s fascist domestic military force. The purpose of this guide is not necessarily to be copied 1-for-1, but for members and comrades of other communities outside L.A. and Minneapolis to see what can be applicable in their respective areas of struggle.

All rapid response networks (RRNs) use group chats (mostly via encrypted applications, but unsecured apps like WhatsApp are often used by community members), video chats, in-person meetings, know-your-rights trainings, etc. to various degrees. There are the main, vetted chats for seasoned members, which run long-term strategy and are used as a main hub for

³ “Rapid Response Networks in the Twin Cities A Guide to an Updated Model.” 2026. CrimethInc. <https://crimethinc.com/2026/01/15/rapid-response-networks-in-the-twin-cities-a-guide-to-an-updated-model>.

sharing info that needs to be distributed to the entire collective. Then, there are groups separated by region and by type of action. There can be patrol chats that are set up for deletion after that day or week's work, while whole regional chats act as mini-hubs for larger collectives and coalitions.

In larger coalitions, it is common to have standing committees for things like community outreach, education, media, security, etc., that will cover particular necessary tasks for organizing and mobilizing. For example, who creates the flyers and social media posts? Who will run the KYR trainings? Who will talk to the media? In larger and more organized collectives, these tasks are often delegated to committees that meet regularly and give report-backs to the larger collective.

Community patrols and community hubs are key tactics being used to defend our communities. The available logistics, area of coverage, and people power will shape how patrols and hubs are managed. Community patrols, which are performed by teams of people in cars, actively look for ICE activity and respond to alerts. Community hubs are key sites where people often visit or congregate and where ICE is targeting people regularly.

If you don't have many people to fill shifts of daily patrols and hubs, or are covering too large an area, it could be beneficial to identify key sites to set up hubs as a priority. Identify locations in your community like Home Depots, car washes, known hotspots for street food vendors/taquerias, etc., and plan for at least two people at the major sites. Establish a presence and build ties and relationships with the people impacted by, and scared of, the fascist violence.

It's essential to build these connections and obtain community "buy-in" because they will amplify your popular power and bolster community defense operations. Hubs can act as great spots to outreach as a result of their often well-trafficked nature. It is also essential to establish hotlines that allow the public to easily call and contact the RRNs. When you are communicating with day laborers, vendors, etc., make sure you have physical material to give them. Flyers, information sheets, KYR cards, and a way to reach the RRNs for help when they need it. Not everyone in the

community needs to actively be part of patrols or other such activities, but if the majority are aware of you, aware of how to reach you, or know to alert other centralized systems like StopICE.net, then you multiply your RRNs' organizational and mobilization ability to keep your neighbors safe, by building trust with the community and giving them the ability to participate in their own defense.

If you have more than enough people power to cover major sites with daily Community Hubs, then roving community patrols along main streets and common access routes for ICE is the next step up. If the area's street layout permits, do it in a gridlike pattern. This is another opportunity to do community outreach and inform the community about the rapid response network and their rights. It's also common for alerts to go up on social media, be sent to the hotlines, or be posted on websites that aren't at a hub, so patrollers must actively respond to those alerts as quickly as possible. Depending on the kidnapping attempt, it's a matter of seconds to minutes before the victim is in federal custody; we have to at least document the event and get the victim's identifying information.

Tailing ICE and CBP convoys is another common tactic that is not always encouraged, depending on the collective. However, it would be foolish to act like people aren't engaging in this tactic often, so we will discuss it. Following from a safe distance, and not doing it alone, is preferable. Constant communication with other organizers on the ground about the location of fascists is necessary to make community defense effective. Knowledge of the area and the people living in it is important too, so you can better expect where they will be heading.

Legal and aftercare for those directly affected by this fascist violence is a necessity. The National Lawyers Guild, Immigrant Defense Network, and other organizations must be involved in coalitions. Though many RRNs and other groups have started to increase mutual aid efforts to take care of the families of those kidnapped and brutalized, the need for care should to be highlighted and examined so organizers in community groups can

figure out how we can scale these projects up to entire neighborhoods and cities.

In the event that ICE/CBP agents are cornered by the community or organizers, in effect leading to a standoff, it's important to be aware of the balance of forces. Are you outnumbered? Are they outnumbered? How many federal agents and policemen are there? Are media or legal observers present? Are there medics available if things get tough? Do you know where specifically you can escape if you need to?

Direct action must be tactically and strategically approached. We don't want people needlessly arrested or brutalized by fascists. A comrade in a jail cell or a hospital bed is a comrade demobilized from the fight. It's important to remember this will be a long struggle. The outcome won't be decided by one street clash, so remember to be like water, and keep yourself and each other as safe as possible. Street barricades, counter-fireworks, umbrellas, personal protective gear, and other such tools need to be considered when street clashes become commonplace, as they did in Los Angeles in the summer of 2025 and in Minneapolis in early 2026.

Rapid response networks are not always set up the same way. Some are autonomous or "affinity" groups that spontaneously formed and mostly lack concrete internal structures. These tend to be very fluid in terms of allowing new members, and will rarely "use peace police" tactics, and lack definitive leaders. However, this fluidity often leads to political eclecticism, which can create internal conflict and contradictions.

For example, in these autonomous RRNs, it is common to have communists, anarchists, progressives, liberals, and somewhat apolitical people all be involved. Notions among members about structure and internal democracy, let alone about tactics and strategies, can vary dramatically. And, without defined leadership, rules or guidelines, or a political vision, there's a major concern about these groups having long-term viability. There's also concern about whether these groups can adequately adapt to rapidly changing material conditions without these organizational institutions in place.

Some RRNs are initiated and run by NGOs like the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights L.A. (CHIRLA) here in Los Angeles. There are obvious pros and cons to these formations. They usually have dedicated, paid staff to oversee the administration of the network. There tends to be more funds for materials and other actions as well. But there isn't a radical political vision within the NGOs. They work within the bourgeois framework, so the question arises: if fascist political violence increases, can they adapt to the moment that would require more militant resistance?

Other RRNs, like the ones affiliated with the Community Self Defense Coalition (CSDC) in Los Angeles County, feature more "communist party"-esque principles combined with some characteristics of a big tent "affinity"/autonomous group. There is a base set of political principles and points of unity, such as: "End police & ICE terrorism in our communities!" "NO to Raids, Deportations & family separation!" "Money for Public Education and Social Services!" "Not Fascism or Genocide!" "End US intervention in Nuestra America, Africa, Asia, Middle East. Close ALL Concentration Camps (Immigration Detention facilities, Prisons)!" "We will NOT collaborate with ICE, police, sheriffs!" "This Land belongs to Indigenous people; (Tongva, Kizh, Chumash, all original protectors of the land)!" and "We will struggle for Self-Determination for ALL oppressed people and our future generations!"

All of these points of unity have to be accepted by individuals and organizations that join the CSDC, which coheres a set political vision that autonomous groups don't tend to have. But there's also not a detailed, long-term political economic system being proposed, thus allowing many different political ideologies to work together within the coalition. The CSDC also has a set steering committee with members of various coalition member organizations that have authority and responsibility over the coalition.

Rapid response networks are developed with a variety of structures and political currents and must be built with knowledge of the conditions on the ground of the community in which they

were set up. The tactics and strategy being used by anti-fascist forces are not uniform. However, there are commonalities to be seen across the different battlefields—whether it's Los Angeles or Minneapolis.

We must continue to learn and educate each other about what's happening on the ground, as the resistance to fascism and capitalism constantly morphs and develops into something new. Join, or help to start, your local community defense groups and rapid response networks. Starting can be as simple as knocking on your neighbors' doors and asking their names. There is a long fight ahead, and we will have to know each other well if we want to win.

12. The Missing Revolution of the 21st Century: Horizontalism & Anarchism vs the Communist Party Structure

Originally published January 26, 2026, on Red Star Tribune. While not directly about the anti-ICE rebellion, this essay was directly inspired by that struggle. This was an attempt to look at the structures and strategies of the anti-fascist resistance in 2025 in recent historical context to other “revolutions.”

“And the revolution itself must not by any means be regarded as a single act..., but a series of more or less powerful outbreaks rapidly alternating with periods of more or less complete calm. For that reason, the principal content of the activity of our Party organization, the focus of this activity, should be work that is both possible and essential in the period of a most powerful outbreak as well as in the period of complete calm, namely, work, of political agitation...” -Vladimir Lenin

There has been a surge of autonomous groups in organizing spaces in recent years. For those who came up in the wake of Occupy and the Indignados—in the wake of the financial crash and Arab Spring—the topic of horizontal or autonomous groups is nothing new. It was the dominant mode of radical organizing, especially for spontaneous actions, for the better part of a decade. Across the world, Greece, Spain, Brazil, Chile, the

U.S., and more, all experienced significant social upheavals, often fueled by these movements throughout the first quarter of the 21st century. Frequently, they were described as spontaneous, leaderless, horizontally structured, and digitally organized.

With a new generation entering the struggle that didn't come up in that environment—and for many engaged in anti-ICE resistance today—the topic of how to organize is and should be back in the discourse cycle. I want to examine the recent history of spontaneous, autonomous, or horizontal uprisings, and detail the theoretical and practical debate between different modes of organizing—utilizing the work *If We Burn* by Vincent Bevins, my own practical experience with these two modes of organizing, and the theoretical work at the foundation of this debate. “Vertical vs horizontal organization” is not a new debate. However, with each new generation that joins the struggle, it seems to come back into vogue.

Since I've been politically aware and active, we have seen waves of mass protests and movements around the world, with limited or backwards results. We have lived in recent decades through the biggest protest movements in world history multiple times, but without any seismic shift in the global system of capitalism. We must get to the root of this question; the answer lies in the type of organizations and movements we are building and sustaining.

21st Century: An Era of Horizontalism & Anti-Politics

Brazil's Anarchist Movement Against Social Democracy & the Return of the Far-Right

For those who were too young or somehow weren't paying attention at the time, in the early 2010s, the world was aflame. Mass protests and movements swept the globe in response to a variety of local and international conditions. The Arab Spring, Indignados, Occupy Wall St., and so many more were global

phenomena. From 2011-2014, you could not escape some form of “revolution” happening. It was a massive and much larger echo of similar movements in the late 90s and early 2000s— Seattle and Ukraine, in particular.

With the violent overthrow and dissolution of the USSR and numerous other socialist countries, the Old Left in many places lost its social cache. The communist-style of party organization had seemingly lost the Cold War. This was the ‘end of history’ as we knew it. In the US and the West generally, this meant a further collapse of the Old Left communist parties, which were already in a state of decline. The few holdouts at the time—China, Cuba, DPRK, Vietnam, and Laos—went through difficult periods of development and change during the direct aftermath of the USSR’s fall.

Not that it tells the full picture, but the fact that we as a society went from grunge to nu-metal is a sign of the nihilism that had festered in the superstructure with the complete collapse of the “Old” and “New Left” of the 20th century. In most places, the longstanding or well-known vehicles for political engagement and change were seen as dead. The resurgence of more anarchist forms of resistance is also a byproduct of that post-Soviet period of neoliberal globalization, hyperindividualism, and the aforementioned social nihilism.

Mass protests and occupations of institutions or public spaces were not new tactics. While the New Left had a significant militant communist element, it also had a nebulous left element, like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) or even the American Indian Movement (AIM), which had anti-communist tendencies. The Civil Rights Movement generally used mass protests and sit-ins as well. The tactics that became synonymous with Occupy or other 21st century movements were not created by them, but merely the utilization of past techniques from previous struggles.

Of course, anarchist structures, or autonomous and horizontal structures, were not new to the Left or social movements in the 2000s. There’s a long, storied history of that school of thought. Its theoretical, tactical, and strategic differences with the communist party structure will be in the next section, but

it's important to note that when talking about these movements in the last 26 years, it's ultimately, mostly, coming from the anarchist tradition. Though not every example of this era will fit that categorization.

When referring to the Ukrainian or Hong Kong uprisings in the mid-2010s, these were not left-leaning anarchists, but they were in this continuum of the period of horizontal and "leaderless" movements. These spontaneous eruptions in respective societies can best be described as "societal explosions." Political vacuums in Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Yemen, Brazil, Chile, the U.S., and many other places, in large part developed by these mass protest movements, are a crucial element to this story as well. But the reality is that political vacuums don't truly exist. There are always groups waiting to fill that vacuum immediately.

Brazil is the most intriguing example to detail and discuss. The Old Left in Brazil was not as weakened by the collapse of the USSR or the Sino-Soviet split as so many other parties had been, in large part, because it was a crucial part of the resistance to the long-standing military dictatorship throughout the 20th century.

In 1980, when the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT/Worker's Party) was founded as a new mass left party, the Partido Comunista do Brazil (PCdoB) was a key part of that development and anti-dictatorship coalition with the PT. So when the PT rose to executive power with Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2002, the PCdoB was an active part of the new center-left, progressive administration. The largely Indigenous-led Movimento Sem Terra (MST/Landless Workers' Movement) is also a long-standing left-leaning political and social movement. And then there's the explosive youth punk-scene reading Kropotkin and Bakunin. These factors all poured into this post-dictatorship society, where the society had not fundamentally changed, and was ready to explode.

Neoliberalism was still pushing a hyper-reactionary oligarchy that controlled the media, judiciary, and military. The new left coalition coming to political power was in a precarious position and had to produce results fast. It should be stated that from 2003 to 2016 (from Lula to successor Dilma Rousseff), 20 million people

were lifted from poverty by policies they and the PT largely enacted. Raises in the minimum wage, increased investments in socialized healthcare, and higher education were all positive for the general public. But there were a few moments early in their tenure that indicated the clock was ticking.

In the year Lula was elected, a mass protest movement kicked off in the city of Salvador by the student union "strongly linked" to the PCdoB. It was over the rising public transportation fares in the city, and it initially started with Old Left support. But as it grew bigger than the student union could control, protesters started to declare "no flags" at the demonstrations, and that this was now a movement without any party. In 2004, Lula deployed the Brazilian military along with the US and UN forces to overthrow progressive Haitian leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide in an act of imperialist regime change. And the following year at the World Social Forum, the Movimento Passe Livre (MPL/Free Fare Movement) was formed.

The MPL was initially a very small, leaderless, and horizontal group. Its founding charter stated, "a horizontal movement is a movement in which everyone is a leader, or where leaders do not exist." It declared it would be "autonomous" and fully independent of existing political parties. All decisions would be made by consensus, not majority vote. The MPL itself was directly inspired by the neighborhood assemblies in Argentina that formed in 2001 when the state and economy collapsed, which adopted horizontalidad as well. Chile had a similar history with asambleaismo.

Lula would end his two terms with an 83% approval rating and, as previously mentioned, some major reforms and policies helped the masses of Brazil. However, Lula wasn't conducting a socialist transformation of the country. That was never in the plans for him, and especially, but more broadly, the Workers Party as well. Before he was elected, he'd already made a promise to continue the basic economic structure of the previous administration.

His successor, Dilma Rousseff, who is now the head of the New Development Bank within BRICS, was a former communist

guerrilla during the era of the military dictatorship. She was imprisoned and tortured in the early 70s for her work. Rousseff won the election in 2010 and became the first, and to this point only, woman president of Brazil.

All of this is part of the “Pink Tide” that rolled through Latin America, where progressive and some outright socialist administrations came to power in Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador, and Paraguay. The Left was the key force resisting U.S. puppets and interventions in the region for a better part of a century, and was slowly gaining real political power. For MPL, and ultimately the future of the Brazilian people, this didn’t matter to them. An age of anti-politics became the norm. In 2011, they targeted the issue of raised bus fares. Less than 50 total members of MPL at the time managed to create a political snowball that led to Jair Bolsonaro and the far-right gaining political power in Brazil.

MPL organized protests, invasions of bus stations, mass fare evasions, and admittedly declared their movement an “a-party” movement. They would tear down any political flags that fellow protesters would bring to their actions. In 2013, mass police repression, intense and slowly shifting media coverage, the overall global political climate, and many more seen and unseen factors led to the biggest mass protests in Brazilian history. Millions marched. Thousands brutalized by the police and caught all on camera.

But the reality of a leaderless and structureless movement started by 50 people is, who decides who’s in and who’s out? When millions are now joining you, how do you centralize messaging? How do you stay on target for what you are organizing? In a running theme of this era, the political explosion that MPL created against not a fascist military dictatorship, but a progressive, left-leaning democratic administration, gave open ground for the far-right to take control.

When leaders aren’t collectively decided upon, they will develop on their own. That’s what happened to the mass movement in Brazil; Jair Bolsonaro and his cronies co-opted even the name of the MPL (the right-wing formation that formed during

that period, being the MBL) and latched onto that anti-politics that had become the norm. He was able to position himself as a political outsider and thus garner populist support. The MPL struggle that originated on the issue of bus fares became a nationwide mass protest movement over state repression. Since the state was at that time run by the Workers' Party, and since the MPL had no inclination to develop electoral party politics, the fascists filled that vacuum.

Dilma Rousseff was impeached in 2016, Lula was imprisoned, and the 5th largest country in the world rapidly declined from the improvements under the PT government. Bolsonaro's various far-right party allegiances and the MBL set the struggle back decades. Lula was eventually freed, and the PT is again in political power, but in a clearly more fragile domestic dynamic compared to their meteoric rise. When Lula first left office, his approval rating was 83%. Now, at 80 years old and planning to run again, is only at 34%. Bolsonaro is in police custody and facing 27 years for a coup attempt. His son most likely will be the far-right candidate for the next election after his father put nearly 10 million people into poverty.

The MPL still exists, but the original 50 or so members have all left. MST was a key coalition partner to get Lula freed and running again. But the future of Brazil is in a mist. Beyond the horizon at this point. The Workers' Party and PCdoB have not recovered from the societal explosions in the mid-2010s, and the anarchist movement has been limited after the MPL's difficulties

The Echoes of Arab Socialism from Egypt to Yemen

Egypt was a hotbed for Arab Socialism and nationalism throughout a major part of the 20th century. Gamel Nasser was a Third World icon who had retaken the Suez Canal from colonizers, established political sovereignty, and aided other anti-colonial movements—notably Yemen.

Nasserites were never too friendly with communists internally, though there was a major relaxation of internal repression against communists in the 1960s; Egypt would develop close ties to the USSR as well. The national liberation struggle carried out by Egyptians during that period was shaped by the Leninist/Communist party structure. Nasser himself initiated the creation of a Leninist-style group called the Vanguard Organization to defend the revolution.

However, in 1970, Nasser unexpectedly died and was succeeded by Anwar Sadat. He would immediately reposition Egypt towards the US, kick out Soviet military advisors, and implement early neoliberal policies. When Sadat launched a war against Israel in 1973, he would be in constant communication with Henry Kissinger about their battle plans, which were automatically fed to the Israelis. This was indicative of the seismic shift away from Arab Socialism towards an Arab bourgeoisie that was capitulating to the West, which would hit the region in the late 20th century.

Sadat would reverse the land reform under Nasser, handing land back to the feudal class. He restarted the mass repression of the Left. There were bread riots in 1977 over this forced reversal of the gains under Nasser and Arab socialist policies. By 1981, Sadat was assassinated by the Muslim Brotherhood—a reactionary nationalist organization founded in 1928. Hosni Mubarak would replace Sadat and continue neoliberal shock therapy into the global debt crisis of the 80s. IMF and World Bank forced economic liberalization that ravaged Egypt.

Mubarak would accept debt relief from the US in 1991 in exchange for his support of the US invasion of Iraq. In the 2000s, he “privatized billions in assets, which landed in the hands of a new, super-wealthy capitalist class,” and unemployment would rise.

Tahrir Square, in the heart of the capital, Cairo, has been a long-standing site of protests and class struggle. Protests over Palestine, US invasions, etc., were seen throughout the decades. In the early 2000s, George W. Bush pushed Egypt to “democratize,” which would lead to the Muslim Brotherhood

winning local elections, and the re-emergence of leftist and progressive organizations. Kefaya, or “Enough!”, was founded in 2004 as a non-hierarchical and cross-ideological collective.

They would organize protests and other similar events, but nothing materially changed. Wildcat strikes in the capital in 2008 would lead Kefaya to attempt to rally a general strike, but to no success. However, they would at this time receive training and aid from both US NGOs and Tunisian radicals.

Everything drastically and tragically changed in 2010 when Khaled Said was beaten to death by the notorious Egyptian police force—the country was a de facto police state for decades at this point. Facebook became a key aspect of mobilizing the dramatic response, a common feature of the mass protests of this era, but not too dissimilar to the way Instagram and Signal are used today. A protest was called for just eleven days after the president of Tunisia was forced into abdication due to the Arab Spring protests there. The target was not Mubarak, but the Interior Minister, who was head of the police in effect.

In the planning meetings for Kefaya, someone asked, “What will we do after we reach Tahrir Square?” Everyone laughed it off, assuming they would never reach the square. On January 25, the protest would break through the police line and reach the square, combating the police repression for hours before petering out. Three days later, they were back.

Everyone would come out to protest—Nasserites, socialists, communists, liberals, religious fundamentalists, secularists, the youth, petty bourgeois, and the poor. Anyone who was against the Mubarak regime was together in protest. Calls for “Bread, Freedom, Social Justice!” and “The people want the fall of the regime,” rang out from the crowd.

As Bevins writes, it was “relatively spontaneous... leaderless, horizontally structured, and ideologically diverse.” However, it wasn’t “nonviolent.” The masses went to war with the police that day, and the masses won. Over 90 police stations were burned down, and scenes of police officers ripping off their uniforms out of fear of confrontation and running away were common.

At this point, the masses and various organizations in this popular front could have “taken anything.” If they wanted to storm the centers of power and media. And immediately trigger a social revolution, they could have without a doubt. The police force was at this point arguably more powerful than the military; defeating them in the capital was significant and altered the balance of forces. The masses and the organizations involved didn’t take over. They choose to stay in Tahrir Square. But there was no revolutionary vanguard. There was no clear leadership to direct this energy towards revolution. This was just a “mass of people” in the city center.

They would hold the square for weeks, and on February 11, the military refused orders to fire on the crowd. It was the end for Mubarak. The military removed him and then controlled the country under the name Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), promising democratic elections would be held. They would go on to murder dozens of protesters in the following period, particularly Egyptian Coptic Christians. The largest organization that participated in the protests and had a hierarchical structure was the Muslim Brotherhood.

The election in May 2012 featured Mohamed Morsi (Muslim Brotherhood), Ahmed Shafik (Mubarak faction), Hamdeen Sabahi (one of the founders of Kefayah and a Nasserite), and Abdel Fotouh (former/reformed Muslim Brotherhood). Sabahi and Fotouh, who represented the progressive candidates, received 21% and 17% of the vote, splitting their base. The runoff would be between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Mubarak faction.

The various small groups from the protests were split on who to vote for and if they should vote at all. There was no real attempt to coalesce forces into a real united front against reactionary forces regaining power. It’s important to note that Yemen, which at one time was a key part of the Arab Socialist movement along with Nasser’s Egypt, had a very different experience during this period. As I’ve written about and created a documentary on, Yemen’s history is perhaps the most misunderstood radical history of West Asia.

The PDRY was the only nation in the region governed by a Marxist-Leninist party and saw a radical transformation in the 20th century. However, Western and Saudi intervention and colonialism were always a problem, even before the founding of socialist Yemen. The country being forcibly split apart for nearly a century was also a massive contradiction that led to untold suffering.

The country was eventually unified in the 1990s, but at this point, the socialist nation was no more. Neoliberal reform devastated the country, and from the ashes of the PDRY, a cross-ideological movement emerged that would end the Saleh regime—Ansar Allah Movement. From 2011-2014, they would reform, reorganize with their first politburo, and form a united front with the Yemeni Socialist Party and other progressive forces. They would retake the capital and the parts of the nation with the majority of the population.

And ever since then, they have resisted Saudi, UAE, and US-backed forces and direct bombings, blockades, etc. All leading to a genocide against the Yemeni people by the West and its proxies. Yemen, though, has entered a period of social transformation and revolution, due to a broad united front that was not leaderless or horizontal in its approach.

Ukraine's Maidan Uprising & Fascism

The Maidan Uprising or Euromaidan in Ukraine in 2013 was a centerpiece in the long history of where we are today in the region, with hundreds of thousands of lives lost in a tragic proxy war with Russia. A century of history and struggle culminated in the rise of reactionary politics in the region.

There's a direct link from the days of the Stepan Bandera fascist groups like the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) to the Azov Battalion, Right Sector, etc. of today that have dominated Ukrainian politics over the last two decades. The former fascist groups were directly responsible for mass murder during the Holocaust and attempted to help wage Nazi Germany's war of settler colonial conquest of

the USSR. Azov and Right Sector have elevated Stepan Bandera as a “national hero” of Ukraine and overtly call for fascist policies.

As the USSR was collapsing and being overthrown, in 1990, Ukraine declared sovereignty but not secession. The following year, the referendum to stay in the USSR won with 70% of the vote. After the clash between communist “hardliners” and Yeltsin’s pro-Western forces, the next referendum saw 90% of Ukrainians vote for full independence and separation from the USSR.

With the fall of the USSR, nearly 17 million people would die in the former socialist republics in the next decade. Human trafficking, substance abuse, poverty rates, etc., all drastically rose with the semi-forced capitalization of the former socialist economies and workers’ societies. It was a massive wave of primitive accumulation in the modern age that devastated everything from local communities to the international struggle against capitalism and imperialism. It was the single worst defeat for the oppressed people of the world since the fall of the Paris Commune.

“Since the collapse of the USSR, wages fell globally, access to food declined, and global labor reserves exploded. The instruments of imperial and neo-colonial domination—from sanctions to dollarization, debt to financialization—subordinated ever-greater parts of the Third World. The story of Eastern Europe’s supposed “liberation” is a story in which the floodgates of neo-colonial subjugation opened far and wide, unleashing a torrent of exploitation with potentially terminal consequences for the planet—the violence and destruction inherent in the process of accumulation now threaten to extinguish the majority of life on earth, whether through climate and environmental breakdown or nuclear war.” [writes](#) Pawel Wargen.

In 2004, Viktor Yanukovych and Viktor Yushchenko were running opposite each other for president. Yanukovych was leaning toward sustaining the relationship with the now Russian Federation, while banker Yushchenko was supportive of a pro-Western and US foreign policy. When Yushchenko lost the election by all accounts, his ally, the “gas princess” Yulia Tymoshenko, called for mass protests in the streets, saying the

election was rigged. Hundreds of thousands poured into Maidan Square.

US support for the “Orange Revolution” was automatic, plus Yushchenko’s wife was a US citizen with ties to the US State Department. Mass public pressure, combined with a deeply corrupt political system with capitalist oligarchs in effect running the country, and the Supreme Court nullifying the results, all culminated in a new vote where the pro-Western candidate won. This color revolution was deemed a great example of “people power” throughout Western media.

It was the start of the “Ukrainization” policies, such as making Ukrainian the only language to be used in government, even though 30% of Ukrainians spoke Russian as their first language, controversially listing the “Holodomor” as a genocide, and naming Bandera as a “hero of Ukraine.” Yushchenko ended his term in 2010 with a 4% approval rating.

Yanukovych would win in the 2010 election, and his policies on the culture war around Ukrainization favored pluralistic, but economically, he was inept, and the political “movement” (if one can even call it that) around him was just another bourgeois faction. In 2013, 56% of Ukrainians said they thought the fall of the USSR did more harm than good. Indeed, since 1991, the population of Ukraine has declined by 7 million people.

By 2012, the European Union offered a deal that would force further economic liberalization (stagnated wages and slashing pensions) without offering actual acceptance into the EU. Russia, on the other hand, offered \$15 billion and a “great deal on gas” plus threats of sanctions and trade bans. When Yanukovych announced he would not take the EU deal, it was the signal for another color revolution. NGO’s like the Center for Civil Liberties, with US funding, pushed for a “horizontal” and “self-organized” mass protest movement to retake the Maidan Square. There was a concerted effort to get social media attention in English-speaking countries like the US as well.

Yes, the Maidan movement started because of the EU vs Russia trade deals, but it really wasn’t about that. There was mass social dissatisfaction for decades. Millions had died, millions more

went into poverty, with no answers in sight. A political vacuum had formed, and the trade deal was just the catalyst to set off the struggle to see who would fill that void of political control.

Center-Right Orangists like Vitali Klitschko, liberal academics and professionals with Western-backed NGO's, fascists like the Svoboda Party, and even the Communist Party of Ukraine, all tried in the early days to take hold of the growing unrest. Increased police crackdowns—especially against the youth and students—would escalate the situation drastically.

The far right, which included all the aforementioned fascist groups, but also monarchists, dominated the football clubs and the rank and file of the military. They had the most experience in fighting and street combat. They were well organized and not horizontalist in structure. The fascists and far-right had cohered around the ideology of a “purer” Ukraine and reverence for Bandera. They were completely united, unlike every other faction of the struggle.

During the protests, self-defense groups developed, called “hundreds.” It quickly became completely controlled by the far right. Registration to form one within Maidan was restricted from leftists, anarchists, and communists. C14, a youth fascist gang, would even chase off leftists with bats and knives who tried to register. The Hundreds would go through basic riot school and street combat training and would resemble highly militarized paramilitaries by the end of the Maidan. People's Councils would form after the far-right and military took over governmental buildings in western Ukraine. The country was collapsing into a full-fledged fascist color revolution. All on the initial basis of horizontalism and mass protests. Street combat and shootouts between fascists and Yanukovich forces led to dozens being killed, and pro-Maidan forces allegedly used sniper rifles against their own fellow protesters in a false flag operation, murdering over 50 people.

The rest is sadly history; Fascist groups would help usher in a full Western-centric government, and economic liberalization increased. Culture War took an even uglier turn with pogroms against Russian minorities and leftists, and the banning of

opposition parties like the Communist Party of Ukraine. Mass murder became common, and over ten thousand lives were lost due to Ukraine's far-right war against Russian minorities living in the country. It led to a separatist movement in the east of Ukraine and now a full-scale war with Russia, with mass destruction and death.

As Vincent Bevins writes, “a pattern had emerged in the evolution of mass street protests. They start over something specific, then they explode to include all kinds of people...” This had the effect of combining a host of “contradictory visions” where eventually one specific vision wins out. “In the middle, infinite possibilities present themselves.” However, the finite possibility of reactionary nationalism and fascism is always present when there is weak Labor and Leftist organization. Ukraine, unfortunately, did not have a strong Labor or Communist movement, and as we have said before, political vacuums are temporal events where the strongest and best-organized tend to dominate.

Occupy Wall St. and Black Lives Matter Uprisings

The 2008 financial crash and subsequent Wall St. bailout had global ramifications. Add the consistent fascist policies and racialized violence within the US, and there was bound to be an explosion. From 2011 onwards, there have been rolling mass protests, resistance movements, and uprisings throughout the US.

The Occupy Movement of 2011-2012 was in this continuum from Tunisia, Egypt, Brazil, Hong Kong, and more. It was a “horizontal” and “leaderless” movement in which decisions within the encampments had to be made by consensus, not majority vote. It was absolutely an anarchist-led movement. David Graeber, a famed anarchist, was the de facto spokesperson for the struggle. He is credited with coining the well-known slogan “we are the 99%.” On November 29, 2011, he [wrote](#):

*“Almost every time I’m interviewed
by a mainstream journalist about*

Occupy Wall Street, I get some variation of the same lecture: 'How are you going to get anywhere if you refuse to create a leadership structure or make a practical list of demands?...' It was only on August 2, when a small group of anarchists and other anti-authoritarians showed up at a meeting called by one such group and effectively wooed everyone away from the planned march and rally to create a genuine democratic assembly, on basically anarchist principles, that the stage was set for a movement that Americans from Portland to Tuscaloosa were willing to embrace."

In reality, for the thousands that would filter in and out of small Zuccotti Park, they had little material effect—if any—on the U.S. capitalist order. Despite the development of various democratic institutions, such as clinics and libraries, they were not effectively challenging capitalism. There were no shutdowns of the economy, even with its position down the block from the hegemony of finance capital. Occupy “was tiny” when compared to other uprisings in Brazil, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Greece, and Spain during that time.

The people’s assembly was based on consensus, so a small minority could, and did, block key votes throughout its period. When Civil Rights icon John Lewis came to show support, two people were able to block him from entering and giving a speech—one of them a white graduate student. If one person can assert their will over the collective, that doesn’t seem like radical democracy. There was also internal conflict over who controlled the social media accounts for the encampment. All of these things led to it whimpering away as a moment in time.

In 2014 and in 2020, far more consequential uprisings took place over the racialized and fascist violence against black and brown people within the US. The murders of Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, and countless others by the police, sparked massive social unrest. Street combat with the police became commonplace. While there were clashes with the police during Occupy, this took a far more militant and direct approach. Police vehicles and at least one building were burned down by thousands of people. Centers of political power, such as police stations, were overrun in certain places. Occupy, despite the energy that seemed to be behind it, never accomplished any of this.

The BLM Uprisings were spontaneous, and by the best account, leaderless and cross-ideological. However, it should be stated that in local struggles, leaders did emerge, often faceless and behind the scenes. Certain organizations carried more weight in areas, such as the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and BLM chapters. Plus, direct goals were being demanded—defund the police being one. In a period of intense rejection of neoliberal globalization (Occupy), racialized and fascist state violence (BLM Uprisings), and the rise of Bernie Sanders and the Democratic Socialists, one should be asking—where’s the revolution?

The Party vs Autonomy? A False Debate?

“There are no people – yet there is a mass of people. There is a mass of people because the working class and increasingly varied social strata, year after year, produce from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the struggle against absolutism, the intolerableness of which, though not yet recognized by all, is more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time, we have no people, because we have no leaders, no political leaders, no talented

organizers capable of arranging extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would employ all forces, even the most inconsiderable.” -Vladimir Lenin

We have gone over several examples of mass uprisings of the 21st century, and the varying effects on social and class order they had, but it's vital we separate and compare these conflicting systems of struggle. Communism vs Anarchism, Autonomy vs Democratic Centralism, Horizontalism vs the Party—whatever terms we can interchange, we know this debate. It's a centuries-long one with bruised feelings on both sides of the aisle. As previously shown, not all horizontal structures are exactly alike, but I would like to separate them into two categories: consensus based vs majority based. In the era of the early 2010s, the former was dominant. It shaped the scale of the struggle in Brazil and the US, especially. Both were significantly hindered due to this structural decision. The MPL became stuck when conditions were rapidly changing and increasing in volatility, which left a vacuum for the far-right to take over as the more organized force. In the US, it froze the Occupy movement from ever doing something impactful. Both movements also became almost a wholesale rejection of the theory of organization. Noted women's liberation organizer and figure of the New Left, Jo Freeman, wrote in her 1971 essay, [The Tyranny of Structurelessness](#):

“Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group of people of whatever nature that comes together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible; it may vary over time; it may evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power and resources over the members of the group. But it will be formed

regardless of the abilities, personalities, or intentions of the people involved. The very fact that we are individuals, with different talents, predispositions, and backgrounds makes this inevitable... A 'laissez-faire' group is about as realistic as a 'laissez-faire' society..."

Not all anarchist or autonomous groups develop faux-structurelessness organizations. Many organize committees concerning mutual aid, study groups, training, OPSEC, etc. but they almost all reject defined leadership structures. However, that very concept creates an illusion because informal leadership structures will emerge. That contradiction, without being negated, will fester into a social wound within the collective. Freeman continues:

"All groups create informal structures as a result of interaction patterns among the members of the group. Such informal structures can do very useful things, but only unstructured groups are totally governed by them. When informal elites are combined with a myth of "structurelessness," there can be no attempt to put limits on the use of power... This has two potentially negative consequences... The first is that the informal structure of decision-making will be much like a sorority -- one in which people listen to others because they like them and not because they say significant things... The second is that informal structures have no obligation to be responsible to the

group at large. Their power was not given to them; it cannot be taken away. Their influence is not based on what they do for the group; therefore they cannot be directly influenced by the group. This does not necessarily make informal structures irresponsible.”

Now, what's the point of this organizational framework and principle if it has these flaws? As Graeber stated during Occupy:

“The easiest way to explain anarchism is to say that it is a political movement that aims to bring about a genuinely free society — that is, one where humans only enter those kinds of relations with one another that would not have to be enforced by the constant threat of violence. History has shown that vast inequalities of wealth, institutions like slavery, debt peonage or wage labour, can only exist if backed up by armies, prisons, and police...As a result, Zuccotti Park, and all subsequent encampments, became spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society — not only democratic General Assemblies but kitchens, libraries, clinics, media centres and a host of other institutions, all operating on anarchist principles of mutual aid and self-organisation — a genuine

attempt to create the institutions of a new society in the shell of the old.”

It's a noble endeavor and a real struggle to create dual power structures. That must be stated and not confused when there are criticisms of these structures. If dual power structures exist in themselves, meaning they don't conflict with the actual existing power structures, does it really meet the definition of that concept? Another issue, as previously stated, is the consensus-based, leaderless/structureless concept done without a self-critical lens. Graeber stated:

“From the very beginning, too, organisers made the audacious decision to operate not only by direct democracy, without leaders, but by consensus. The first decision ensured that there would be no formal leadership structure that could be co-opted or coerced; the second, that no majority could bend a minority to its will, but that all crucial decisions had to be made by general consent. American anarchists have long considered consensus process (a tradition that has emerged from a confluence of feminism, anarchism and spiritual traditions like the Quakers) crucial for the reason that it is the only form of decision-making that could operate without coercive enforcement — since if a majority does not have the means to compel a minority to obey its dictates, all decisions will, of necessity, have to be made by general consent.”

However, a consensus vote in effect bends the majority to the minority within the collective. It is anything but democratic if one person can impose their will on the rest through simple obstruction. That seems to, in effect, be a reinforcement of the system, the very system that hierarchy Graeber and other anarchists denounce. Rather than reactionary or capitalist forces putting in the effort to co-opt a whole hierarchical leadership structure, all they need to do is send a couple of individuals who can hold up any decision.

The act of building separate institutions outside of the current repressive capitalist system, “direct action” as Graeber referred to it, in itself is not the revolution. If the political power of capitalists and imperialists is not contended with directly, is it direct action in the material sense? Or is it activism for the sake of activism? Organizing is a word that gets thrown around, but how are we organizing? What are we organizing for? How do we organize?

“Traditional Marxism, of course, aspired to the same ultimate goal but there was a key difference. Most Marxists insisted that it was necessary first to seize state power, and all the mechanisms of bureaucratic violence that come with it, and use them to transform society — to the point where, they argued such mechanisms would, ultimately, become redundant and fade away. Even back in the 19th century, anarchists argued that this was a pipe dream. One cannot, they argued, create peace by training for war, equality by creating top-down chains of command, or, for that matter, human happiness by

*becoming grim joyless
revolutionaries who sacrifice all
personal self-realisation or self-
fulfillment to the cause.” -David
Graeber*

Graeber is correct in that the key difference between communists and anarchists is that communists have shown and theorized that, in order for a socialist transition to occur, seizing political power is a necessity for economic and social revolution. Anarchists believe political power is anathema to the goal of a classless society. But Graeber is incorrect on the other key difference—how we organize.

The communist party model developed over nearly a century. The early social democratic parties, the original Communist League, and the First International, all operated on different principles that would define the communist party in the 20th century—notably Democratic Centralism. But they had structures. There were leadership structures, especially. Even the infamous co-founder of modern anarchism, Mikhail Bakunin, in the only International Congress he attended (Basle 1869), proposed for “the construction of the international state of millions of workers...” This was anything but a rejection of the state, centralization, etc.

“Freedom of debate, Unity of Action” is the defining slogan of Democratic Centralism. The communist party, developed under the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party and later the Bolshevik Party, was centered on this concept. During the turn of the century in Tsarist Russia, the Marxist movement was split on many issues, and some of the questions being who counted as a party member and the role of local groups within the larger national collective.

Some argued that anyone showing support was a party member and that local collectives would have complete autonomy from the national leadership structure. In an age of intense repression and looming revolution, these were considered impossible standards for a revolutionary and mainly underground

party. The “majority” sided with a tight understanding of who was a member, someone actively involved in party work, and that smaller bodies (i.e., local groups) of the party have to submit to the larger bodies (national committee). And that set the standard for how communist parties would be structured, with variances in between the margins.

Usually, though again not every communist party conducts itself in the same exact measures, parties will have major conventions every few years. These are where the entire collective can make radical changes. It features delegates from every smaller, local body, for debate and policy determinations for the next few years. Every delegate has an equal vote. A standing body, a national committee, is elected from this convention to be responsible for the party’s national and sometimes international policies between conventions.

Local bodies could be separated by regions, provinces, states, and then even lower bodies at the city, factory, and neighborhood level, all feeding from the bottom up, delegates and leaders. City chapter leaders are voted on at the chapter level, then those leaders who are at the state level vote on leadership there, and all the way back up to the national level at conventions. There is constant debate and discussion; constant tests of democracy. But then decisions are made as a collective democratically, and plans of action are drafted, and it’s expected for all party members to follow through on those plans, regardless of how they voted.

“In its struggle for power, the proletariat has no other weapon but organization... the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only when its ideological unification by the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organization welding millions of toilers into an army of the working class.” -Vladimir Lenin

If one thing is clear, it's that "go and organize" is not so simple. Determinations on how to organize can have ramifications. There are differences in strategy and tactics. Unfortunately, too, this has life-or-death consequences for those resisting the state, capitalism, fascism, and imperialism. Lenin saw in his time, political eclecticism leading to revolutionary stagnation. Centralizing the communist movement and developing party discipline was a life-or-death decision. This was not some abstract intellectual exercise, and to conduct a successful revolution, those systems had to be in place.

Where did the Missing Revolution Go?

"It is often said that the working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory reveals the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily, provided, however, this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity, provided it subordinates spontaneity to itself...The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater extent." -Vladimir Lenin

It is obvious we have seen consecutive 'biggest protests in human history' to little global systemic change. Spontaneous uprisings have been a feature of the 21st century. In some places, one political elite was simply replaced with another. In other places, the states and capitalists cracked down on the movement so hard it hasn't recovered. Other places were broken by the political vacuums created with no real, organized working class movement to fill that gap.

Imagine for a minute, the ICE uprisings keep scaling upwards. Millions and millions are shutting down the country. Rolling General Strikes from state to state. Then mass marches on the capital, and Trump's goons flee to Epstein's Island or some

other far hideaway. Who, or what groups, will take over the political power of the country? How will the next decision get made? Did classes disappear? Did the social ills created by US settler colonial society disappear?

Political vacuums are temporal events. They collapse almost as soon as they form. As Bevins wrote:

“In the mass protest decade, street explosions created revolutionary situations, often on accident. But a protest is very poorly equipped to take advantage of a revolutionary situation, and that particular kind of protest is especially bad at it. If you believe that you can forge a better society...then you should enter the political vacuum yourself. But a diffuse group of individuals who come out to the streets for very different reasons cannot simply take power themselves, at least not as an entire diffuse group of individuals. Once someone goes in [the political vacuum] and takes power in the name of the masses, you are talking about a type of vanguard—a particular ideological project...In some of the more utopian strains of anti-authoritarian thought, the riot is supposed to become the new society, but this has not worked out so far.”

Egyptian activist during the Tahrir uprising, Hossam Bahgat, remarked when thinking about the failures of that revolution, “Organize. Create an organized movement. And don’t be afraid of representation...We thought representation was elitism, but actually it is the essence of democracy.”

The Party model is not perfect. It can be slow at times to change and reform. The long periods in between national conventions or plenaries can have a detrimental effect, especially in times of crisis. Leadership can get entrenched. Dogmas can manifest themselves. But there is a direct mechanism for that change to happen. There are democratic structures enshrined to check the vestiges of bourgeois ideology.

Graeber stated in his famed Charlie Rose interview that “I think structures of hierarchy, if you give people complete impunity and power over others, it creates a psychological dynamic which is almost sadomasochistic.” However, the communist party model doesn’t fit that description. There is no “complete impunity” for party leaders. There are plenty of famous examples of party leaders being purged in the U.S. alone, with Lovestone and Browder. There are bylaws expressly stating how party leaders are held accountable by the greater collective. In a structureless, leaderless, and consensus-based collective, there is “complete impunity” for one individual being able to block the will of the rest of the collective. There’s no structure to remove that person. There is no structure to avoid that contradiction—unless informal and undemocratic structures develop.

So when looking at the vast field of lost revolutions of the 21st century, and the gravestones of all the martyrs we lost along the way, we have to ask ourselves, did we organize correctly? And the answer from the available evidence in most cases says we didn’t. Now we are facing an even worse ecological crisis, rising fascism, a new state of imperialist world order, and mass fascist violence in the streets of the capitalist hegemon—the U.S.. What changes have been made? Are we organizing differently from 2011? Because if we wish to succeed, we must.

The silver lining here is that all those struggles were not truly lost. Momentum may have stalled, the fascists may have won small victories, but that social energy and class rage can only lie dormant. It can never be killed, no matter how many of us are killed. And when the revolutionary situation arises again, we must fill that gap. We have to take over that political vacuum with a

purpose. "Socialism or barbarism?" will be the question of this century, and the missing revolution must be discovered.

*"Settle your quarrels, come together,
understand the reality of our
situation, understand that fascism is
already here, that people are already
dying who could be saved, that
generations more will live poor
butchered half-lives if you fail to act.
Do what must be done, discover
your humanity and your love in
revolution." –George Jackson*

As with all communist writings, even though we wish it could be achievable, this article can't encompass the totality of these topics and history. This article has been greatly inspired by my differing organizing experiences both in a Marxist-Leninist party and autonomous organizations, and the recent book by Vincent Bevins, *If We Burn*. I highly encourage the reader to go beyond this article and, above all, go out and help organize for the revolution.

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